

Dear Warden:

Below please find a warden message from the U.S. Embassy in La Paz, Bolivia. Please share this warden message with any U.S. citizens in Bolivia with whom you have contact. We hope this information is useful to you. If we may provide further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,
American Citizen Services Unit
U.S. Embassy La Paz, Bolivia

WARDEN MESSAGE
U.S. EMBASSY LA PAZ, BOLIVIA
April 22, 2010

This warden message informs U.S. citizens traveling to and residing in Bolivia that protestors have placed several roadblocks along the road between Potosi and the border town of Abaroa. On Wednesday, April 21, a group of several dozen tourists was traveling along this route when their eighteen car motorcade was stopped and detained by demonstrators for several hours. Protestors threw rocks at the cars and threatened the tourists with metal batons. Eight hours after the ordeal began, the tourists successfully escaped unharmed and continued on to their intended destination.

Miners and local community members have placed the blockades to protest against the Sumitomo Corporation that operates the San Cristobal mine near the city of Abaroa. The demonstrators accuse the mining company and local officials of depleting the community's water source and failing to complete several development projects they claim were promised. The situation has the potential to become more volatile and poses a credible risk to travelers in the area.

U.S. citizens are urged to avoid the road between Potosi and Abaroa until further notice. Individuals traveling to the Salar de Uyuni should carefully select a route that bypasses this road or postpone their trip until a later date. People traveling by land to or from Chile should also avoid the border town of Abaroa until further notice.

U.S. citizens are reminded that demonstrations and road blockades are not unusual in Bolivia, and even though they might be intended to be peaceful they can turn confrontational between security forces, demonstrators, and bystanders, and escalate into violence. U.S. citizens are urged to avoid the areas of demonstrations and to exercise caution if within the vicinity of any protests. If you find yourself in the vicinity of a large gathering, it is recommended you leave the area immediately for your own safety. U.S. citizens should stay current with media coverage of local events. Please note that the police have limited capabilities outside major cities and communication is poor.

U.S. citizens may wish to access tips on emergency preparedness through the Department of Homeland Security's website at http://www.dhs.gov/xcitizens/editorial_0711.shtm.

For the latest security information, U.S. citizens traveling abroad should regularly monitor the Department's internet website at <http://travel.state.gov> where the current worldwide caution, travel warnings and travel alerts can be found. Additional information is available in the country specific information for Bolivia at <http://travel.state.gov> and on the Embassy web page at <http://bolivia.usembassy.gov>.

Current information on travel and security in Bolivia may be obtained from the Department of State by calling 1-888-407-4747 within the United States, or, from overseas, 1-202-501-4444. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays). U.S. citizens traveling or residing overseas are encouraged to register with the appropriate U.S. embassy or consulate on the State Department's travel registration web site at <https://travelregistration.state.gov>.

U.S. citizens may contact the consular section of the U.S. Embassy in La Paz, Bolivia, via e-mail at consularlapaz@state.gov or by telephone at (591-2) 216-8246 during business hours (Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.) or (591-2) 216-8500 after hours and on weekends. The consular section is located in the U.S. Embassy at 2780 Arce Avenue in La Paz, Bolivia, and is open to the public (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., and Thursday, 8 a.m. to 12:30, and from 14:00 to 16:00). The Santa Cruz consular agency will be closed from March 31, 2010, to April 23, 2010. The Cochabamba consular agency can be reached at 591-4-411-6313 (Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.).

Sincerely,
American Citizen Services Unit
U.S. Embassy La Paz, Bolivia

Drafted and Cleared by Daniel Koski, La Paz
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CLEARED:

CA/OCS/ACS/WHA: Drew Haldane

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DS/DSS/ITA: Elizabeth Prevatt

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WHA/AND: Barbara Rocha

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